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# LETTER DATED 2 FEBRUARY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you a press release issued today by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in connection with Security Council resolution 1226 (1999), adopted on 29 January 1999, regarding the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Duri MOHAMMED
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Press release regarding the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia on 2 February 1999

The United Nations Security Council on Friday 29 January 1999 adopted Resolution 1226 (1999) regarding the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The Government of Ethiopia is encouraged by this latest position taken by the Security Council which left no ambiguity with regard to what is expected from whom. Eritrea has been asked by the Security Council to withdraw from occupied Ethiopian territory and this is one of the central messages conveyed by the resolution. In giving its strong support to the OAU Framework Agreement by calling it "the best hope for peace" and by calling for its "full implementation without delay," the Security Council has left no room for prevarication and spin doctoring by Eritrea.

It is known by all that countries whose borders have been violated and whose sovereignty is challenged have the right to defend themselves. But in the face of Eritrean aggression, Ethiopia did not answer force with force. To the contrary we have sought to seek a solution to the crisis through peaceful means in the hope that justice and international law will prevail.

It is in this spirit that Ethiopia accepted in full proposals for a peaceful resolution to the crisis since Day One. Not because we didn't have problems with the proposals, but for the simple reason that we recognized that the proposals on the table were fair and balanced -- and notably did not reward aggression.

Our acceptance of the OAU Proposals for a Framework Agreement was based on our conviction that, whatever their shortcomings, the proposals represented the best possibility to address the fundamental issues at stake in the dispute in a just manner. The OAU Proposals do not leave open the possibility for misinterpretation and misrepresentation. They are clear and their implementation is being urgently awaited by Ethiopia and the international community. Resolution 1226(1999) is very significant in this regard because its support for the OAU effort leaves no doubt and it is also clear about what the unfinished business consists in ---- The implementation of the OAU peace proposal. Period. But what can be seen from Eritrea's reaction to the resolution is that its authorities are still far from being prepared to listen to reason.

All indications point to Eritrea continuing with its intransigence and with its policy of provocation and of the imposition of unwanted war on Ethiopia. Eritrea appears to have decided to stay put after having occupied Ethiopian territory, no matter what the international community says unless what the international community says is backed by action which puts Eritrea under real and tangible pressure.

In the meantime, we urge the international community to follow closely what Eritrea might be up to because if its past behaviour is something to go by, the Eritrean authorities are most likely to intensify their provocation of Ethiopia, all the more now because they no longer can create confusion and mislead the international community and there is no room for further prevarication. As far as peace proposals are concerned, the game is up for Eritrea. Is Eritrea prepared to implement the OAU Framework Agreement? This is the question Eritrea needs to answer. Eritrea might continue to blame third parties to divert attention. Amnesty International might give Eritrea a hand in this ---- as others are helping the aggressor in other more lethal areas ---- as it did with regard to its last pronouncement which, wittingly or unwittingly, coincided with Security Council discussion leading to the adoption of Resolution 1226. But there is no more fig leaf for Eritrea, including a so called clarification from the OAU. That is sealed and delivered. The ball is again firmly in the Eritrean Court.

February 2,1999

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